

## **This Month's Feature**

### **It's all about the other white meat – pork!**

We have some great pork recipes this month with lots of different cuts and ways to prepare them. North Carolina is the second largest hog-producing state in the nation, yielding approximately 15% of the national supply. Fresh pork is leaner than it has ever been! Packed with protein, pork is a healthy choice for mealtime. It's a new year so here are some comfort recipes using NC Pork.

#### **Zuppa Toscana Soup**

*Spicy sausage and bacon, russet potatoes and greens in a creamy broth.*

1 lb. spicy Italian sausage - crumbled  
1/2 lb. smoked bacon - chopped  
1 qt. water  
(2) 14.5 oz. cans (about 3 2/3 cups) [chicken broth](#)  
2 lg. russet potatoes - scrubbed clean, cubed  
2 garlic cloves - peeled, crushed  
1 med. onion - peeled, chopped  
2 cups chopped kale OR Swiss chard  
1 cup heavy whipping cream  
salt and pepper - to taste

-In a skillet over medium-high heat, brown sausage, breaking into small pieces as you fry it. Drain and set aside.

-In a skillet over medium-high heat, brown bacon; drain, set aside.

-Place water, broth, potatoes, garlic, and onion in a pot; simmer over medium heat until potatoes are tender.

-Add sausage and bacon to pot; simmer for 10 minutes.

-Add kale and cream to pot; season with salt and pepper; heat through.

PERSONAL Note: My mother-in-law has made this for years and our family loves it. I just found out this recipe was created by Jessica Dudley. So thanks Jessica for this delicious soup made with plenty of ingredients grown or produced in NC.

#### **Brined Roast Rack of Pork with Molasses-Mustard Glaze**

##### Pork

6 cups water  
1 container apple juice concentrate, thawed

½ cup kosher salt  
½ cup brown sugar  
1 Spanish onion, peeled and quartered  
10 black peppercorns  
10 mustard seeds  
8 sprigs fresh thyme  
2 bay leaves  
1 (3 lb) center cut rack of pork  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
3 shallots, finely chopped  
2 cups Jack Daniels  
5 cups homemade chicken stock  
¼ cup light brown sugar  
2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter  
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat leaf parsley, plus parsley sprigs for garnish

1. Bring the water, apple juice, salt, sugar, onion, peppercorns, mustard seeds, thyme and bay leaves to a simmer in a large stockpot and cook until the sugar and salt is dissolved. Let cool completely. Submerge the roast in the brine by placing a plate on top, cover with plastic and refrigerate for at least 12 hours and up to 24 hours.

2. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Remove the pork from the brine and pat dry with paper towels. Heat the oil in a large sauté pan over high heat. Season the pork on both sides with salt and pepper and cook on both sides until golden brown, about 5-6 minutes. Transfer the pork to a baking sheet, brush with some of the glaze and finish cooking in the oven until cooked to an internal temperature of 150 degrees on a meat thermometer, about 25-30 minutes, brushing with the glaze every 10 minutes. Remove from the oven; let rest loosely tented with foil for 10 minutes.

3. Add the shallots to the sauté pan (that the pork was browned in) and cook until soft. Add the Jack Daniels, scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon and cook until almost completely reduced. Add the chicken broth and brown sugar and bring to a boil and cook until reduced to a sauce consistency. Whisk in the butter, season with salt and pepper and stir in the parsley.

4. Slice the rack into chops and place on a large plate, drizzle a little of the sauce around the pork chop and top with some of the butter. Garnish with parsley sprigs.

### Molasses-Mustard Glaze

¼ cup Dijon  
2 tablespoons whole grain mustard  
¼ cup molasses  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Whisk together ingredients in a small bowl.

PERSONAL Note: This is one of the recipes Chef Bobby Flay cooked at the 2008 NC State Fair. It has become a family favorite. He uses a rack of pork but we use a pork loin.

### **Glazed Smoked Pork Butt**

1 smoked pork butt, about 3 pounds

1 onion

1 stalk celery

½ cup orange juice

¼ cup NC honey

1 tablespoon prepared mustard

6 canned peach halves

Place onions and celery in the bottom of the crock pot. Season pork with salt and pepper and place on top of vegetables. Fill with ¾ cup water and cook on low for 8-10 hours. Combine orange juice, honey and mustard. Pour over the meat and simmer for the last 15 minutes, turning and basting until glazed. Add peach halves and cook a few minutes longer to glaze and heat.

PERSONAL Note: I found this recipe from a brochure my 93 year old grandmother had from the NC Department of Agriculture that was printed in 1973. You can also make this on the stove. Cover the pork with water, bring to a boil and simmer for 1 ½ to 2 hours, or until tender and drain. Then continue with the glaze.

### **Pork Butt Sandwich with marinated Purple Cabbage**

Left over pork from above recipe

1 head of purple cabbage, shredded

¼ cup olive oil

¼ cup cider vinegar

2 tablespoons sugar

In a medium bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, and sugar. Season marinade with salt and pepper and pour over the cabbage. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour (or up to 3 days).

PERSONAL Note: Great way to use leftovers and create another meal. Serve it up on your favorite bun.

### **Panko-crusted pork chops with a blackberry sauce and Betty's sweet potatoes**

4 boneless thick cut pork chops

¼ cup all-purpose flour

1 large egg, lightly beaten

1-cup panko crumbs

¼ cup vegetable oil

Place flour, egg and panko, each in separate shallow bowls; season each with salt and pepper. Dip pork chop into flour and then egg, shaking off excess. Dip into panko, pressing to adhere. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add pork, and cook until browned and cooked through, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Transfer to a paper-towel lined plate.

#### Blackberry Sauce

6 oz. seedless sugar free blackberry jam

1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1-teaspoon sugar

Warm sauce through and add pepper to taste.

#### Miss Betty's Sweet Potatoes

8 Baked sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced lengthwise

2 cups brown sugar

1-cup honey

1 cup melted butter

½ (or 12 oz.) jar of orange marmalade

Put sliced sweet potatoes in baking dish. Mix all remaining ingredients and pour over potatoes. Bake at 350 for 1 hour, basting every 20 minutes.

PERSONAL Note: We had the privilege of joining the Angus Barn family for lunch and Miss Betty, who has been there for 45 years fixed her glazed baked sweet potatoes. They were so delicious; we asked if we could share the recipe. Enjoy!

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**Zuppa Toscana Soup Video**

**Brined Roast Rack of Pork with Molasses-Mustard Glaze Video**

**Glazed Smoked Pork Butt and Pork Butt Sandwich with marinated Purple Cabbage Video**

**Panko-crusted pork chops with a blackberry sauce and Betty's sweet potatoes video**

**NC Recipes from The Umstead with Chef Paul Kellum**